

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Tuesday, September 28, 1999**

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY).

**DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE**

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
September 28, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN COOKSEY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

**MORNING HOUR DEBATES**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

**THE BUDGET PROCESS AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES**

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, for those who are concerned about making our communities more livable, New Year's Eve is approaching; not the one that ushers in the new millenium, but one which for a number of us may be even more problematic. I am talking about the Federal fiscal new year that ends in just 2 days. As the end draws near and as we begin the final stages of this year's budget process, there are still many decisions to be made and much work to be done.

Currently our friends on the Committee on Appropriations are trying desperately to avert the disaster of last year's omnibus spending bill. We all recall the millions upon millions of dollars given away in the dead of night to special interests and pet projects as we in Congress were given a 2,714-page bill at 4 o'clock in the afternoon to vote on at 7 that evening. This pathetic process made Congress look foolish while sadly skewing our funding priorities. It was a lose-lose proposition.

The truth is that apparently we did not learn from last year's mistakes, and as this year's budget end game approaches, we are finding that we are in a similar situation. The budget gimmicks, the phony emergency spending, the effort to redefine the Federal fiscal year, adding an extra month, delaying this funding, advanced funding, the list is long as the Committee on Appropriations struggles to keep faith with the unrealistic spending caps that we all know were broken last year and which are being broken as we speak.

It is not the fault of the Committee on Appropriations, who, if left to their own devices, could craft a much better product. But as we travel down this familiar and unfortunate route, we are finding that what is broken is also the public trust in how the Federal Government uses their money.

But it does not have to be the case. We can change by shifting our priorities from partisan jockeying to funding initiatives that will truly make a difference in the daily lives of our constituents. We need to call upon our friends in the leadership, the Committee on Appropriations, and the administration to secure funding for things that will make our communities more livable.

A good place to start is in the administration's own budget, in a list of livable communities initiatives. They are not big ticket items, but they would offer dramatic impacts.

Some of those livability initiatives include the lands legacy package, to expand Federal efforts to save America's natural treasures, and provide significant new resources to States and communities to protect local green spaces.

The Better America Bonds is a proposed new funding tool that would generate \$9.5 billion in bond authority for investments by State, local, and tribal governments in green spaces, urban parks, water quality, and brownfield cleanup. Tax credits, totaling more than \$700 million over 5 years, are proposed to finance the bonds.

There is the Community Transportation Choices, the TCSP program, already authorized by Congress under the T-21 legislation, which earlier this year generated over 500 creative proposals to help communities deal with the transportation challenges that they face. Thirty-two grants totaling \$13 million were given, but now the entire program has been earmarked. Instead of giving communities direct aid, rewarding those that submit the most

creative and effective proposals, only five of the proposed earmarks even bothered to submit a proposal altogether.

As we travel America, there are very few people who are concerned about the partisan squabbling over our budget. Most of America is concerned by the tragedy that was represented by the massive flooding and storm loss, the loss of life and property by Hurricane Floyd. They are focused on problems of everyday life: pollution, congestion, unplanned growth, and safety of their children. Congress needs to implement these livability proposals in the budget process now to address what Americans have spoken for.

The local newspapers from coast-to-coast are filled with references to people trying to make their communities more livable. Funding these initiatives is necessary to minimize problems in the future, while improving the quality of life for generations to come.

We owe it to our constituents to fund these initiatives, and I encourage the Committee on Appropriations to include them in our budget to help make our families safe, healthy, and economically secure in more livable communities.

**RECESS**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 7 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

**AFTER RECESS**

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS) at 10 a.m.

**PRAYER**

The Chaplain, the Reverend James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We know how simple it is to talk about matters of faith, and how easy it is to speak of the relevance of religion for ourselves and for our Nation. Yet, O God, we know that there is often a chasm between what we say and what we do.

On this day we pray that our good words of faith will find meaning in the good works of justice in our daily lives, and all that we profess with our

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.